LEARN ONE THING EVERY DAY

AUGUST 15 1919 SERIAL NO. 185

THE MENTOR

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION

(WOMEN)

By ARTHUR B. MAURICE

DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE

VOLUME 7
NUMBER 13

TWENTY CENTS A COPY

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The craving for tales of adventure, for romance, the thirst for fiction of all kinds are our attempts to force entrance again into that Palace of Endless Delight—to recapture the mood of the child.

From the *New York Sun*. BENJAMIN DE CASSERES

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THE MENTOR · DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE
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MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION

(WOMEN)

By ARTHUR B. MAURICE

Former Editor of The Bookman, author of "New York of the Novelists"

MENTOR GRAVURES

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

•

GERTRUDE ATHERTON

•

MARGARET DELAND

Photo by Press Illustrating Service, Inc.

MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN

MENTOR GRAVURES

EDITH WHARTON

•

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

•

MARY ROBERTS RHINEHART

WHILE woman is still a pioneer in some of the fields of modern activity, in the art of fiction she has a splendid feminine tradition, either to follow or to depart from. It is not necessary to go to other lands for illustration, to point out the place held by Frances Burney in the closing years of the eighteenth century, to acclaim the grasp of George Eliot, or to show George Sand in her day measuring pace with even such giants among her fellow-countrymen as Balzac and Dumas (doo-mah). The story is told that when Abraham Lincoln first met Harriet Beecher Stowe he remarked, as her frail hand dropped into his great, brawny one, "So this is the little woman who caused this big war!" Whatever view may be taken from the point of sectional partisanship or critical literary appraisement of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that book of feminine authorship was, in its far-reaching effects on the destiny of a nation, the greatest

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single work of fiction that the nineteenth or any other century has produced.

That a novel has won great material success does not necessarily stamp it as possessing quality. On the other hand, there are entirely too many dyspeptic critics in the land branding popularity as a crime, and suggesting that the book that numbers its readers by the tens of thousands deserves, for that very reason, the contempt of the discriminating. Before consigning what is known as a "best-seller" to outer darkness, it is worth while to recall that George Eliot's "Middlemarch" enjoyed some such distinction in its day, and that an enormous public, from duchess to lady's maid, thrilled over Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre." So the fact that in the last fifteen or twenty years a great many novels written by American women have achieved pronounced conspicuousness and large sales cannot legitimately be regarded as an argument against their high quality.

Courtesy Little, Brown & Co.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

Mary Wilkins, Ellen Glasgow and Alice Hegan Rice

"The greatest piece of fiction in America since 'The Scarlet Letter.'" That was the verdict of Hamilton Wright Mabie on Mary Wilkins Freeman's "Pembroke," and Mr. Mabie gave expression to an admiration shared by thousands of readers. But years before "Pembroke," which appeared in 1894, the talent of the author had won recognition. Her first book, "A Humble Romance and Other Stories," breathed the very soul of gray New England. Then came "A New England Nun" and "The Long Arm," the last-named a curious experiment and a departure from her legitimate art. The years between 1897 and 1904 were feverishly productive. To that period belong "Jerome; a Poor Man," "The Heart's Highway," "Understudies," "The Wind in the Rose Bush," and half a dozen

Photo by Press Illustrating Service, Inc.

MARY STEWART CUTTING

others. These novels are histories of New England people and of New England localities, uncompromisingly faithful to fact. Of the author's later books, in some of which she has departed from the New England environment for rural New Jersey, "The Shoulders of Atlas" should be selected for especial mention.

AMELIA E. BARR

The name of Alice Brown also suggests a New England background. Her reputation as one of the best short story writers in America has been chiefly earned as a portrayer of New England types.

Courtesy Doubleday, Page & Co.

MARY AUSTIN

Ellen Glasgow's name conjures up a vision of Virginia in the storm and stress of the War of Secession, or in the throes of recovery from the ravages of that exhausting struggle. In many of her books the central factor is not a person, but a State. Take, for example, "The Battle-ground," one of her earlier books. Ostensibly it is the intimate history of one Southern family, the Lightfoots, and more particularly the story of one member of that family, Dan Montjoy. But there is a double struggle waged on a double battle-ground; the struggle of a family of federal states at war, and the struggle of a human being for independence of the ties of blood. "The Deliverance" is symbolic of the suffering South in the years of reconstruction. Miss Glasgow was not twenty when she went to her father with the confession: "I have written a book." That was "The Descendant," issued in 1897. Three years later "The Voice of the People" appeared. With "The Wheel of Life" she turned from the Virginian background to picture latter-day New York, the arid and starved existence of its pleasure-seekers, and the weary emptiness of their frivolous days.

Courtesy Charles Scribner's Sons

FRANCES POWELL

Then, turning again to Virginia, Miss Glasgow wrote in succession two of her best novels, "The Romance of a Plain Man," and "The Miller of Old Church," both dealing with the problem arising from the conflict between the lower-class whites struggling to push forward, and the reactionary aristocratic caste striving to hold them back. In "Life and Gabriella," Miss Glasgow made use of both backgrounds, beginning the story with the heroine in her Richmond home, and then taking her to New York.

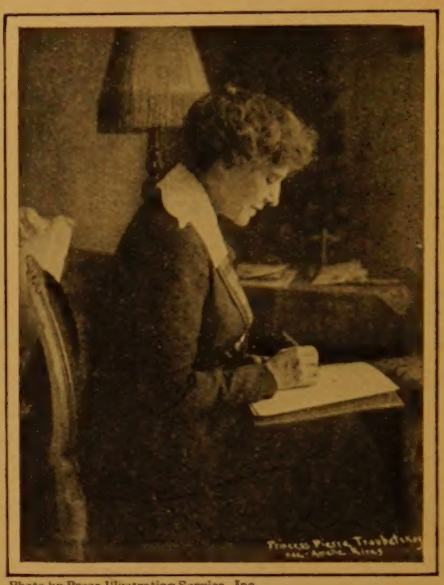

Photo by Press Illustrating Service, Inc.
AMÉLIE RIVES
(Princess Troubetskoy)

In the case of Alice Hegan (later Mrs. Cale Young Rice), it was almost a matter of the Byronic "waking in the morning to find herself famous," for, quite unheralded, "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage-Patch" found its way to the publishers. Without any blare of trumpets it was sent forth, and within a few weeks, its quaint humor and wise philosophy of life were being quoted in every corner of the land. It was Gertrude Atherton who wittily paid tribute to the curious and extraordinary popularity of the little book by speaking of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage-Patch" as "David Harum's Widow." The Cabbage-Patch, situated in the southern part of Louisville, near the tracks of the Louisville and Nashville Railway, was a settlement of shacks and cabins that had sprung up amid a vast amount of accumulated *débris*. To that section went Alice Caldwell Hegan on settlement service, and there she fell in with a Mrs. Bass, who was to become the Mrs. Wiggs of the tale. In the Patch were also laid the scenes of "Lovey Mary."

Mary Johnston, Octave Thanet and Amélie Rives

The names of Miss Glasgow and Mrs. Rice suggest that of another Southern woman, Miss Mary Johnston, who, at the very end of the last century, won instant recognition with the publication of "To Have and To Hold." It was a period when the American historical novel was the fashion. In the pages of her three first books, "To Have and To Hold," "Audrey," and "Prisoners of Hope" we were transported back to the Virginia of romance, where rapiers flashed in the moonlight, the pirate chieftains grappled on the sands, and Captain Ralph Percy gazed over the dancing waters of the Atlantic in the direction of the England of his ancestors. The style that marked those books, a style reflecting something of the Elizabethan period, Miss Johnston has never lost. There are few, if any, of the estates on the banks of the James River that surpass in interest and beauty Westover, owned first by Theodore Bland, sold to William Byrd, passed through

Courtesy Houghton Mifflin Co.
MARY JOHNSTON

many hands until it came into the possession of a Westerner, unrelated to its traditions. In Miss Johnston's "Audrey," Westover was the background of much of the book, which, though professedly pure romance, involved a study in temperamental psychology. "Sir Mortimer" had, as a setting, Queen Elizabeth's court, the Spanish Main, treasure galleons, tropical islands, and a great deal of romantic scenery, while in a later book, "The Fortunes of Garin," the author went even farther afield, finding her characters among the troubadours of twelfth-century France.

ALICE BROWN

When, in 1917, "And the Captain Answered" appeared, thirty years had elapsed since the publication of "Knitters in the Sun" by the same author, Alice French (Octave Thanet). Octave Thanet's stories were justly popular in their day, and they still retain their flavor. After "Knitters in the Sun" six years passed before the appearance of "Otto the Bold," which was quickly followed by "Stories of a Western Town" and other volumes bearing the characteristic stamp of this writer.

Courtesy Doubleday, Page & Co.

ELLEN GLASGOW

To the same day, approximately, in which appeared Octave Thanet's "Knitters in the Sun" belonged Amélie Rives' "The Quick or the Dead," a book that startled by its originality and amazed by its daring. Published first as a "novelette" in *Lippincott's Magazine*, "The Quick or the Dead" established instantly the reputation of the author, then a girl in her teens. The ensuing years have shown that the first book was no mere flash in the pan. Conspicuous among the later works of the author, now the Princess Pierre Troubetskoy, wife of the distinguished Russian painter, are "Virginia of Virginia," "According to St. John," "Hidden House," and "Shadows of Flames."

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AGNES C. LAUT

As in the case of the men that are making modern American fiction, here and there among the women novelists we come upon one that drifted into the business of constructing plots and building up imaginary characters after having begun a career in some other sphere. Before 1901, Eleanor Porter, of "Pollyanna" fame, was a choir and concert singer. Gene Stratton Porter was an expert in photography. Maria Thompson Daviess was a miniature painter. The most direct

road to fiction has ever been through the newspaper office. Journalism was the field of Zona Gale, probably best known through "The Loves of Pelleas and Etarre." From her native town of Portage, Wisconsin, Miss Gale went to New York, where she soon made a reputation as one of the best interviewers in the country. In 1906 appeared her first novel—"Romance Island," to be followed the next year by "The Loves of Pelleas and Etarre." Then came the "Friendship Village" stories, tales of a charming town in a restful back-water of civilization, and "Mothers of Men," in which, for a moment, Friendship Village seemed threatened with modern reform and up-to-date efficiency. In much the same vein have been Miss Gale's later books, "Christmas" and "Hearts Kindred."

GENE STRATTON PORTER

Anna Katherine Green

It is a far cry from the environment of Miss Gale's work to the locale of the books that for more than thirty years have been coming from the pen of the writer generally known under the pen name of Anna Katherine Green. To find fault with Mrs. Rohlfs on the score of character delineation, or to consign her to oblivion for her undeniable eccentricities of style, is an easy matter. But, despite obvious faults, this author can invent a story, and keep the reader in a state of suspense through a volume running to four or five hundred pages. And that, in the type of fiction of which she is professedly the exponent, is, after all, what counts. The book that first brought her into wide notice was "The Leavenworth Case," written in the eighties; for tenseness of narration and cleverness in concealing the identity of the criminal until the very end, she has never surpassed that story. To the same period as "The Leavenworth Case" belongs "Behind Closed Doors," also one of her very best tales. Hardly a year has passed since then in which she has not contributed at least one volume to the already well filled library of mystery. It is not easy to make a selection from the long list of Anna Katherine Green's works. The personal inclination of the writer moves him to mention "The House in the Mist," "The Amethyst Box," "One of My Sons," and "Initials Only."

ALICE HEGAN RICE

In adopting her pen name there was never, on the part of Mrs. Rohlfs, any desire for concealment. On the other hand, the pseudonym of "Sidney McCall" for years completely shrouded the authorship of "Truth Dexter." Now and then in various parts of the country, persons laid claim to "Truth Dexter" and its successor, "Red Horse Hill," with that curious weakness that two or three years ago led to the discovery of a pretended David Grayson in many communities. Then "Sidney McCall" emerged as Mary McNeill Fenollosa, a native of Mobile, Alabama, who, as the wife of the distinguished Orientalist, Ernest F. Fenollosa, had traveled extensively in the Far East. Having lived eight years in Japan, her early books, mostly in verse, had reflected her long residence in the Land of the Mikado. Soon after

Courtesy Henry Holt & Co.

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

"Truth Dexter" appeared, "The Breath of the Gods" was published, then "Red Horse Hill," and, in 1915, "The Stirrup-latch."

Novels of West and South

Mention of literary pseudonyms suggests a striking figure of an earlier period, Helen Fiske Jackson, who, as "Helen Hunt," or "H. H." will always be remembered as the author of "Ramona." Although the scene of that book is California, and its subject the American Indian, the author was brought up in stern New England. The daughter of a college professor, as early as 1870 she published a book of meditative verses of which Emerson spoke in high praise. Then the chances of life took her to the far West, and inspired her to a defense of the "Mission" Indian in her widely read novel, and in more serious, if less popular, works.

In one of the stories of the late O. Henry there is an eloquent tribute to the truth of Miss Murfree's pictures of the mountaineers of Tennessee. For many years, writing as "Charles Egbert Craddock," Miss Murfree effectually concealed her name and her sex. "In the Tennessee Mountains" appeared in 1884. The following year came "Down the Ravine." Among later books should be mentioned "In the Stranger People's Country," "The Fair Mississippian," "A Mountain Romance of Tennessee," and "The Story of Dulciehurst."

Before Marjorie Benton Cooke became a novelist she was a monologist, touring the United States. Her first published book bore the title, "Modern Monologues." Then, in 1910, she wrote "The Girl Who Lived in the Woods," and in 1914 the much discussed "Bambi," a pungent little satire on man in general and the temperamental man in particular. To 1916 belonged "Cinderella Jane," and to 1917 "The Threshold."

Virginia has been mentioned in connection with Miss Glasgow and Miss Johnston, Kentucky with Mrs. Rice, Alabama with Mrs. Fenollosa, and Tennessee with Miss Murfree. It was in Georgia that Corra Harris was born; it was there that, as the the wife of a traveling minister, she came to know the soul and sinew of her own people. Then she began to write, first, letters of a descriptive nature to the *Independent*, and the "Brass Town Valley Stories" for the *American Magazine*. The latter appeared between 1905 and 1909. With "A Circuit Rider's Wife," she first scored a genuine success. Later she carried on the theme with "A Circuit

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JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM BACON

Rider's Widow," but between the two books there came three or four other novels that helped to fix her individual place in American literature.

To enter the field of fiction Dorothy Canfield Fisher broke away from the academic atmosphere. Her first literary venture was a book entitled "Corneille and Racine in England." Then, in collaboration, she wrote a book on English Rhetoric and Composition. In 1913 she wrote "The Montessori Mother." But before the last-named book, "The Squirrel Cage" had definitely placed her among the writers of fiction. Among her later works are "Hillsboro People," depicting life in Vermont, "The Bent Twig," and "Understood Betsy."

Beginning with short stories such as "The Crystal Gazer," which one reviewer characterized as "sheer exercises in style," Mary S. Watts turned to the novel with "The Tenants," portraying the fortunes of an insolvent family in an Ohio community. "The Rise of Jennie Cushing," among other books, added to her growing reputation as a novelist of distinction.

Courtesy Harper & Bros

LOUISE CLOSSER HALE

Courtesy Doubleday, Page & Co.

CORRA HARRIS

While the list of published works credited to Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews includes a dozen volumes, those that command special attention are "Vive l'Empereur!" "The Perfect Tribute," and "The Three Things." These three tales are little more than short stories, but they are striking in originality and force. According to "Vive l'Empereur!" the King of Rome of history and of Rostand's "L'Aiglon" was a substitution, while the real child born to Marie Louise and Napoleon was a daughter, who, in a remote village of Ireland, grew up to womanhood, only guessing at her illustrious heritage. Lincoln is the subject of "The Perfect Tribute"; and "The Three Things," which has been called the best story yet written of the war, pictures world-old truths dawning in the soul of an American boy at the front.

Courtesy The Century Co.

ELEANOR HALLOWELL ABBOTT

When Kathleen Norris began to write, her first published works were the short stories that appeared about 1910, in the reflected light of her brother-in-law, the late Frank Norris. A wide audience distinctly her own was won by "Mother," and has increased with the appearance of later books, such as "The Rich Mrs. Burgoyne," "Saturday's Child," "The Story of Julia Page," "The Heart of Rachel," and "Martie, the Unconquered." "The Story of Julia Page" alone constitutes a claim to high rank among the contemporary literary sons and daughters of California.

Photo by Sarony, N. Y.

MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

As a girl Mary Stewart Cutting wrote verses for *Lippincott's*, and stories for *The Young Christian Soldier*. In 1894 she began to write in earnest, finding a field in lives which, to the casual observer, seem placid and commonplace. Ho· olds ruled directly and indirectly by railway ti. cables went into the making of the very human ' Little Stories of Married Life," "The Suburban Whirl," "Just for Two," and "The Refractory Husband."

Influence of O. Henry

Many men and women of the past decade have written under the influence of O. Henry. Some few have added to the inspiration an originality of subject and treatment that has removed them from any possible charge of direct imitation. Edna Ferber is a conspicuous example. Her Emma McChesney is one of the characters of American fiction with whom the reader of today claims acquaintance. Trained to newspaper work in Milwaukee and Chicago, Miss Ferber wrote "Dawn O'Hara," and then "Buttered Side Down," "Roast Beef, Medium," "Personality Plus," and "Emma McChesney and Co."

MARY WATTS

The girl employed at a miserable wage in "the Biggest Store" was one of O. Henry's favorite subjects. In order to get down to the very heart of things, to feel the romance and the tragedy and the pinching want of these existences, Fannie Hurst has served as saleswoman and waitress, and made trips across the continent in immigrant trains. These experiences went into the creation of "Just Around the Corner," and other appealing narratives of everyday life. Among numerous writing women who are graduates of the newspaper office are Willa S. Cather, Agnes C. Laut, Susan Glaspell and Sophie Kerr. In the case of Miss Cather, work on the Pittsburgh *Daily Leader* led to an association with *McClure's Magazine*. "The Troll Garden" is probably the best known among her books, the list including half a dozen other titles. Like Miss Cather, Sophie Kerr began on a Pittsburgh paper, as the editor of a woman's page, and turned later to magazine work in New York. Her books are "Love at Large," and "The Blue Envelope." Susan Glaspell, from the Middle West, is the author of "The Glory of the Conquered," besides short stories and one-act plays. Agnes C. Laut, a Canadian by birth, but now a resident of New York State, was an editorial writer in Winnipeg from 1895 to 1897, later a correspondent for American, Canadian and English papers, and has produced several well written tales of the Northwest.

KATHLEEN NORRIS AND HER SON FRANK

Pollyanna and Freckles

Courtesy Doubleday, Page & Co.

SOPHIE KERR

There was a time, a few years ago, when everyone was reading "The Lady of the Decoration," a series of letters dealing with Japanese life. Curiosity was keen about the authorship, and interest increased rather than abated when it was learned that the writer, Frances Little, was a close relative of the author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage-Patch." A success equal to that of "The Lady of the Decoration" was achieved by Eleanor Porter with "Pollyanna." But before Pollyanna this story-writer had created another popular character, first introduced in "Miss Billy," and reintroduced in "Miss Billy's Decision," and "Miss Billy Married." The material recognition accorded "Pollyanna" made inevitable the sequel, "Pollyanna Grows Up." Subsequent books by Miss Porter are "Just David," and "The Road to Understanding." Anne Warner is another writer associated with a particular character or characters. "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary" was popular both as a novel and as a play, and was followed by three books dealing with the experiences of Susan Clegg.

Nancy Huston Banks' "Oldfield," fragrant with the spirit of gentle romance, which appeared in 1902, was compared by conservative English critics to "Cranford." It was followed by "Round Anvil Rock," a tale of pioneer life in southern Kentucky. About the same time, or a little earlier, Louise Forsslund was writing "The Story of Sarah," and "The Ship of Dreams," tales of the Long Island shore and the waters of the Great South Bay; and Bertha Runkle was being widely exploited through "The Helmet of Navarre," a novel combining history and romance, well liked by many readers; Edna Kenton was striking a promising note in "What Manner of Man," a study of the artistic temperament; and Miriam Michelson, with "In the Bishop's Carriage," was combining crisp adventure and clever character drawing.

Courtesy The Macmillan Co.

ZONA GALE

If popularity alone constituted a verdict, high rank among novelists would have to be given to Gene Stratton Porter, for by the hundreds of thousands are to be counted those that have found satisfaction and delight in "Freckles," "The Harvester," "Michael O'Halloran," "Laddie," and "A Girl of the Limberlost." The sphere of these stories was a logical one for Mrs. Porter to choose, for she was born close to the Limberlost swamp, and early learned to love Nature. Her first work was purely as a naturalist, and all her illustrations were made with her own camera.

Courtesy Charles Scribner's Sons

MYRA KELLY

Mary Austin began her literary work by writing of the primitive life of the West. There she found the material for "The Land of Little Rain," "The Basket Woman," and "Lost Borders." Later she turned to the more complicated life of the cities, and her much discussed "A Woman of Genius," which appeared five or six years ago, was a novel of temperament rather than one of locality.

The background associated with the novels of Maria Thompson Daviess is Tennessee, a

Tennessee that, for years stagnant as a result of the Civil War, is once more assuming its former joy in life. It is the awakening of that region, mental and spiritual as well as material, that stirred Miss Daviess to forsake the career for which she was trained in the Paris art school to write "Miss Selina Sue and the Soap Box Babies" and "Rose of Old Harpeth." The popular "Melting of Molly" and "The Daredevil" have been dramatized.

Courtesy Houghton Mifflin Co.

ELEANOR H. PORTER

Courtesy Charles Scribner's Sons

KATHARINE HOLLAND BROWN

It would be manifestly unfair to close this consideration of modern American women novelists without alluding to the clever studies of child life by Josephine Dodge Daskam and by the regretted Myra Kelly; to "Red Pepper Burns" and "Mrs. Red Pepper" by Grace S. Richmond; to Helen Martin's pictures of Central Pennsylvania life; to Honoré Willsie's stories of the West, and Alice Duer Miller's sprightly sketches of modish folk; to Louise Closser Hale's "The Actress," a vivid picture of the stage, and a later book, equally clever, "Her Soul and Her Body"; to Mabel Osgood Wright's charming Nature studies, of which "The Garden of a Commuter's Wife" will be most readily recalled; to Katherine Fullerton Gerould's "Vain Oblations," "The Great Tradition," and "A Change of Air," which have won high esteem from the discriminating; to Grace King's "M. Motte," "Tales of Time and Place," "Balcony Stories," and "The Pleasant Ways of St. Medard," pictures of the old Creole civilization of New Orleans that challenge the books of George W. Cable; to Katharine Holland Brown, author of "The Wages of Honor" and "The Hallowell Partnership"; to Frances Powell, author of "The House on the Hudson" and "Old Mr. Davenant's Money"; to Eleanor Hallowell Abbott, who wrote the delightfully whimsical "Molly-Make-Believe" and "The Sick-a-Bed Lady"; and to Jean Webster, whose untimely death two years ago cut short a career rich in the promise held out by "Daddy Longlegs" and "Dear Enemy."

Courtesy Harper & Bros.

FANNIE HURST

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

THE WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS - - - - - *By Grant M. Overton*

A recently published volume containing thoroughly fresh and interesting matter concerning the lives and works of American women writers of today; also just and illuminating appreciations of the literary productions that have come from their pens.

SOME AMERICAN STORY TELLERS - - - - - *By Frederic Taber Cooper*

With chapters on Kate Douglas Wiggin, Ellen Glasgow, Edith Wharton and Gertrude Atherton.

*** Information concerning the above books may be had on application to the Editor of The Mentor.

THE OPEN LETTER

In literature today there is no such thing as sex distinction. Women hold equal places with men. A glance back over the years, however, discloses the fact that this condition of sex equality in literature is a development of only about a century—and literature, as we know, is many centuries old. In the olden time a woman writer was a rare and wonderful thing. The first literary utterance of a woman that we can recall was that of the Greek poetess, Sappho, who lived about 600 B. C. Sappho wrote nine books of lyric poems, and, if we can judge them by the fragments that have come down to us, they were of a high order. It is not poetry, however, that we are considering here but fiction—and, in that field, the earliest weaver of tales of whom we have record was Scheherezade, that entertaining lady who told wonderful stories to her master, the sultan, for a thousand and one successive nights, and so saved herself from the sentence of death. The "Arabian Nights," however, cannot be regarded as reliable history, and we must, therefore, go forward many centuries before we find women taking up the pen and inscribing their names on the scroll of fame.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, Margaret of Navarre (1492–1549) made herself known as a poetess, and as author of that celebrated collection of romantic tales "The Heptameron." Marie, Comtesse de Lafayette (1643–1693), another cultivated French woman, wrote a number of romances that still hold a place in literature. The best perhaps, are "Zaide" and "The Princess of Cleves," which have been translated into English.

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries women used the pen chiefly to record their memoirs or to picture the life of their time. Among notable correspondents and writers of memoirs in France were Madame de Sévigné, Madame de Staël, Madame de Remusat, and Madame Campan—the last named famous as the personal attendant of Marie Antoinette, and the recorder of the sad life of that young queen.

As we approach the end of the eighteenth century, we come upon the first woman novelist of note—Frances Burney, afterwards Madame d'Arblay (1752–1840). She was one of the leading figures in a very distinguished circle of cultivated people in England, and her novels, letters and memoirs are a part of enduring literature. Contemporary with her were Maria Edgeworth, an Irish girl who took readily to fiction and produced a number of novels, some of which, "Castle Rackrent" and "The Absentee," are still read—and Jane Austen, whose fame in English literature has not faded even in this day. It may be said with justice that the appearance of Jane Austen's novels, "Pride and Prejudice," "Mansfield Park," and others, marked the definite entry of women into the field of standard English fiction. Before many years elapsed the women novelists in English literature were as numerous as the men.

In France, the note of fiction was sounded in clear, strong tones by Madame Dudevant, known to fame as George Sand (1804–1876), and she was soon followed by other gifted writers of her sex.

When, in 1847, the novel "Jane Eyre" appeared, the English reading public was stirred to its depths by the originality and strength revealed in the book. The sensation may be imagined when it was discovered that the author, who had appeared "like a flaming spirit from another world," was, in reality, a timid, shrinking young woman, the daughter of a poor clergyman at Haworth, Yorkshire, and that her name was Charlotte Brontë. She was born in 1816 and died in 1855. In her time there were a number of notable women writing fiction in England, among them Mrs. Gaskell, famous for her "Cranford" and other novels, and also for her Biography of Charlotte Brontë. In the throng, the dominating figure was that of George Eliot (1819–1880), whose novels stand among the classic works of fiction

In America one woman of eminent literary stature was at work during the first half of the nineteenth century. This was Harriet Beecher Stowe, a sister of Henry Ward Beecher, and author of the immortal "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a work of fiction which, more than any other, changed the current of history. She wrote many books, and she lived long enough to find herself in a generation filled with distinguished women novelists, both English and American. Today they are too numerous to consider in any short review.

It seems as if, through all the centuries, woman had been waiting for fiction as the right and fitting form of expression for her. She favored the muse, at times, it is true, and she was always ready with bright, gossipy, personal correspondence and memoirs. She was quite content, apparently, to leave epic poetry, history, philosophy and the other solid forms of literature, to mankind. It was not until the novel was created that she took up her pen with eagerness and avidity. As Dr. Mabie has observed: "The appeal of the novel to women is obvious and their early and continued success in fiction has revealed not only their knowledge of the material with which fiction deals—character and manners—but their insight and skill in the art of narration."

W. D. Moffat

EDITOR

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION
(WOMEN)
Frances Hodgson Burnett

ONE

NO matter how long the period of achievement and the list of written books, there is, usually, in the careers of most makers of modern fiction, one brief moment in which an author tastes to the full the measure of success. That moment is the climax. Reaching it are the ascending years; the moment passed, the years descend.

To this rule Frances Hodgson Burnett has been a conspicuous exception. The novel of the next year, will, as likely as not, carry her to heights hitherto unreached. Turning over the pages of bound volumes of the magazines of the seventies, long since consigned to dusty attics, is the pleasantest way in which to read such early stories as "That Lass o' Lowrie's," "Kathleen," and "Haworth's." The Civil War had not been over more than two or three years when she began to write for magazines.

Though English by birth, Mrs. Burnett became American by early adoption. When she was a girl her family moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. After "Haworth's" came "Louisiana," "A Fair Barbarian," and "Through One Administration"; then the great success, "Little Lord Fauntleroy." Four or five years before a line of that story was penned the late Richard Henry Stoddard had written: "There is a quality in the work of Mrs. Burnett which reminds me of Dickens . . . She impresses me as understanding her suffering and sinning characters as fully as Dickens ever understood his—as having a more genuine affection for them, and as never at any time caricaturing them."

"Little Lord Fauntleroy," which appeared in 1883, was a chapter in the code of youth. As a play it was one of the most successful ever presented on the English-speaking stage, and incidentally was the rock against which the craft of the British play pirates was definitely shattered. Despite changes in taste, the story possesses the same appeal to the young and the grown-ups today that it had thirty-five years ago. Fifteen years later Mrs. Burnett struck a new note in "A Lady of Quality," and in its sequel, "His Grace of Ormonde." Ten years later her talent again manifested itself in a new vein in "The Shuttle," "The Secret Garden," and "T. Tembarom." If charm and pathos be enduring literary qualities, the name of Frances Hodgson Burnett will long be remembered.

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COURTESY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION
(WOMEN)
Edith Wharton

TWO

IT is upon "The House of Mirth" that Mrs. Wharton's popular reputation rests. But those persons who judge and value a novel by its art assign that story lower rank than some of her other works. There has never been any disposition to question the truth of the picture which "The House of Mirth" presents, or Mrs. Wharton's qualifications for writing intimately of New York society. Indeed it was to her social position that the book owed at least something of its fame. No one denied that "The House of Mirth" was a well told tale; but it was the feeling that it was society being described from the inside by one who knew that made for the book's great success.

Edith Jones was born of a distinguished New York family and married in 1885 a Bostonian, Edward Wharton. Her grandfather was General Ebenezer Stevens who achieved fame in the time of the American Revolution. From her childhood she had exceptional advantages of environment, travel and education. In Italy she acquired a knowledge of the arts that is reflected in many of her books. "Private tutors," says a biographer, "touched her as a sculptor touches his clay, firmly and caressingly and only to bring out her peculiar excellences, only to help her native genius to expression. . . . Italy and all the other rich backgrounds meant social position, fine traditions, the right surroundings, the right mentors, the right tastes and a considerable gift to begin with! What a mold! It is exquisite, perhaps unmatched in the instance of any other novelist. It is what we dream of for genius." Mrs. Wharton is not a genius, critics aver, "but she moves and always has moved in a world of geniuses." From childhood she has read widely. Goethe, George Eliot, Gustave Flaubert, Balzac, Thackeray, Dickens and Meredith are her literary gods. For her war relief activities in France the novelist has been made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

Mrs. Wharton's first collection of short stories, under the title "The Greater Inclination," appeared in 1899. Their mature power and finished art were swiftly recognized. Here was a writer treading very close on the heels of Henry James, with a keen understanding of human nature, an almost uncanny ability to pursue a motive down to its ultimate analysis, a sure psychology, and a well bred cynicism that was not a pose. It was felt that a new force had come into the American fiction of the day. The rich promise was borne out by succeeding books, "The Touchstone," "Crucial Instances," "The Valley of Decision," and "Sanctuary." "The Valley of Decision" was her first departure from the short story form. It was a broad canvas, picturing Italian life in the last half of the eighteenth century, when the war of the Austrian Succession was followed by a period of superficial calm. "The House of Mirth," with its widely discussed heroine, Lily Bart, appeared in 1905, and two years later "Madame de Treymes," in which Mrs. Wharton again challenged comparison with Henry James by choosing a theme almost identical with that of "The American,"—the clash between a spirited outsider and the intangible resistance of old world traditions and standards. "The Fruit of the Tree" is a study of conscience, introducing problems of labor and factory reform in the United States. In 1911 Mrs. Wharton achieved what is regarded so far as her finest bit of work. "Ethan Frome," a study of the eternal triangle in a New England setting, is as perfect in technique as it is relentless in substance. The novel entitled "Summer" followed in 1917.

Says a discriminating writer, "There is only one opinion about Mrs. Wharton's work: it is excellent but lifeless; it is Greek marble with no Pygmalion near. From this sweeping verdict three—and only three—of her books are to be excepted. They are 'Ethan Frome' and 'The House of Mirth' and 'Summer.' In these three books you can feel the pulse beat. In 'Ethan Frome' the pulse is the feeble quiver of the crushed and dying human heart; in 'The House of Mirth' there is the slow throb of human suffering and anguish, mental no less than spiritual; in 'Summer' there is the excited and accelerated vibration of human passion."

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EDITH WHARTON

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION (WOMEN)

Margaret Deland

THREE

THE fact that Margaret Deland happens to live in Boston is probably responsible for the very general, but entirely erroneous, idea that the Old Chester of her stories is somewhere in Massachusetts. As a matter of fact, it is not in New England at all, but in Pennsylvania, where Mrs. Deland herself was born. Mrs. Deland's first novel, "John Ward, Preacher," appeared in the eighties, about the time that Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Robert Elsmere" was creating a stir on both sides of the Atlantic. It is the story of a Presbyterian minister firmly rooted in Calvinism, married to a girl brought up as an Episcopalian, and the conflict which shades of religious difference brings into their lives. In a way the book was connected with Mrs. Deland's early experiences.

"Philip and His Wife" dealt with the question of divorce. Philip Shore, after nine years of married life, comes to a realization that the bond is irksome because his wife is lacking in spirituality. "The Awakening of Helena Ritchie" tells of a woman, who, under great provocation, leaves her husband and seeks consolation in the company of another man, only to find disillusionment, and to be redeemed through her love for a child. There followed "The Wisdom of Fools," a collection of short stories, and "The Story of a Child," which introduced Old Chester.

Old Chester is a delightful village, at least a hundred years behind the times, where nobody has much money to speak of, where society is eminently conservative, where the houses are all much alike, and where young persons are supposed to be seen and not heard. Foremost in this strange and delightful community is the old rector of the church, Dr. Edward Lavendar, who for forty years has looked after his flock, and who is the philosopher and friend of all sorts and conditions of people. Despite the limitations of a life passed in this unprogressive environment, and a lack of experience in worldly matters, he is gifted with sure and wonderful vision, clear moral sense, and keen judgment. He is a distinct contribution to the American fiction of recent years, and the dominating figure of "Old Chester Tales" and "Dr. Lavendar's People."

Of course Old Chester is or was a real place; many people have testified to the realization of this by writing to Mrs. Deland or to her publishers asking its exact location, as they are seeking just some such quiet and charming spot. It did exist just as depicted by Mrs. Deland, but no longer is to be found except in her stories and in the memories of the author and her childhood associates. In the days when little Margaret Campbell was growing up in Manchester, for that is the town's real name, among the deep lawns, the box hedges and flower gardens, the sloping meadows and pleasant homes that constituted it, and among the prototypes of her Dr. Lavendar and William King and the others that inhabited it, she little suspected that she would some day make use of it in books. Her childhood was much the same as that of any little girl of her time and position. Her family was one of the best in that part of Pennsylvania and earnestly religious. The training resultant from the latter fact is evident in nearly all of Mrs. Deland's work.

After the little girl had grown up and left Manchester, had gone to boarding school near New York, and studied art at Cooper Institute, had begun a career as instructor of design, and married Mr. Lorin F. Deland of Boston—after many years and many vicissitudes her mind turned back to the little Pennsylvania town and, building on her memory, she began writing the old Chester tales and the story of that most lovable character in modern fiction, Dr. Lavendar, himself a composite of two originals beloved by the little Margaret, Dr. Preston, an old Episcopal minister in Pittsburgh, and Dr. William Campbell her uncle, who was once president of Rutgers College. Of course this was long after she had first won her literary laurels. These had come with the publication in 1886 of a volume of poems, "The Old Garden and Other Verses," and two years later with her first novel, "John Ward, Preacher." But it is with Old Chester and the Old Chester folks that the name of Margaret Deland will always be first and most lovingly associated.

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MARGARET DELAND

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION (WOMEN)

Gertrude Atherton

FOUR

THERE are, in a literary sense, two Gertrude Athertons. One belongs to the California in which she was born and in which her early life was passed; the other to the world at large. Affectionately but bitingly, she has depicted her own land in such tales as "Before the Gringo Came," "The Californians," and "The Splendid Idle Forties." In her second aspect she approaches F. Marion Crawford in the variety of her backgrounds. For the scenes of "Patience Sparhawk and her Times" she went to Westchester County, New York; for "Senator North" to Washington; for "American Wives and English Husbands" to England; for "The Aristocrats" to the Adirondacks; for "The Conqueror" ("the dramatized biography of Alexander Hamilton"), to the West Indies. In recent years much of her time has been spent on the European continent, as reflected in "Rulers of Kings," "Tower of Ivory," and "The White Morning."

Mrs. Atherton's first published book, "The Doomswoman," dates back to 1892, but it was "American Wives and English Husbands," written five or six years later, that first piqued wide curiosity by reason of its subject and treatment. That book was quickly followed by "The Californians," "A Daughter of the Vine," and "The Valiant Runaways," and then came "Senator North," in which she depicted a young woman striving to readjust herself to the new order of things, trying to put aside heredity and the conventions, and to live her own free and independent existence. In 1902 appeared "The Conqueror," which told the story of Alexander Hamilton's life, and which, by many critics, is still regarded as her best work. Of "The Splendid Idle Forties," dealing with the old California days, a life already vanishing into the realm of forgotten things, Dr. Frederic Taber Cooper has said: "It has a quality that refuses to be disregarded,—a quality of exotic beauty, an illusive fragrance, a strange mingling of pride and passion and languor."

Quite typical of Mrs. Atherton's later fiction is "Rulers of Kings," which tells of a young American, one Fessenden Abbott, who inherits a few hundred million dollars, and dictates the destinies of the world to the German Kaiser and Franz Josef. Less preposterous in subject was "Tower of Ivory," a fine picture of Munich, and a keen study of the temperament of a transplanted American opera singer. Mrs. Atherton's novel, "The White Morning," is a tale of the Great War, in which the women of Germany unite to throw off the yoke of militarism. "The Avalanche" was published in 1919.

Said Mrs. Atherton in a recent interview, "Most lives are humdrum and commonplace, on the surface at least. So I take characters that haven't had half a chance in real life and re-create their destinies for them and—well, my books are the result. I got the idea from Taine when I was very young."

Benjamin Franklin was a great grand-uncle of Gertrude Atherton's. Her father, Thomas Horn, moved to San Francisco when it was in its infancy, and there the novelist was born. She was educated in California and Kentucky, and when she was still a girl she became the bride of George H. B. Atherton, a Californian whose death soon cut short their married life.

Mrs. Atherton lives in a New York apartment looking on the Hudson. She observes a working schedule of five hours a day—from seven in the morning until twelve. On the first Sunday of the month, in the winter season, her home is the meeting-place of "a very crush of notables—authors, painters, soldiers, diplomats, publishers, journalists, people of fashion, scholars, travelers and not a few who figure under the general title of 'admirers of genius,' and who have maneuvered for a card." As Grant Overton observes, "Mrs. Atherton, had she lived in France prior to 1789, would have been a woman of a salon. If there are modern Madame de Staëls, she is among them!"

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GERTRUDE ATHERTON

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION
(WOMEN)
Kate Douglas Wiggin

FIVE

IN many cases, perhaps it might be said in most cases, to obtain a thorough understanding of an author's work it is necessary to have some acquaintance with that author's early environments and first literary passions. It is particularly so in the case of Kate Douglas Wiggin (Mrs. George C. Riggs), for the books that so many children, not to speak of their elders, have loved, must be in a measure an inheritance from the books that the author herself ardently devoured in the highly impressionable years of childhood. "I believe I write *about* children rather than *for* them," said Mrs. Riggs a few years ago, "and I certainly never read many children's books in my own childhood." This is what she did read between the ages of eight and fifteen: "David Copperfield," "A Tale of Two Cities," "The Arabian Nights," "Grimm's Fairy Tales," "Undine," "The Heir of Redclyffe," "Pride and Prejudice," "Robinson Crusoe," "Swiss Family Robinson," and Shakespeare from cover to cover. This indication of her taste and the fact that she was born in Philadelphia, that her girlhood was passed in rural New England, that, at the age of eighteen, she went to live in Santa Barbara, California, and in her days of maturity spent much time in the British Isles, helps us much in the understanding of her stories—whether they deal with the simple-hearted Rebecca, or the sophisticated Penelope.

As early as 1888 the first story appeared, "The Bird's Christmas Carol," a whimsical Yule-tide yarn, which was followed by "The Story of Patsy," and "A Summer in a Cañon." These were all written before 1890. Then came "Timothy's Quest," which was the story of Timothy and the little protegé he saved from the terrors of the almshouse. A little later Miss Penelope Hazelton appeared upon the scene of fiction, a well poised young woman to whom we were introduced in "Penelope's English Experiences," and reintroduced in "Penelope's Progress," and "Penelope's Experiences in Ireland." After the last-named book came "The Diary of a Goose Girl," and, in 1903, "Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm," easily the most popular of all the author's works. Later stories by Kate Douglas Wiggin are "Rose o' the River," "New Chronicles of Rebecca," "The Old Peabody Pew," "Susanna and Sue," and "Mother Cary's Chickens."

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KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

MAKERS OF MODERN AMERICAN FICTION
(WOMEN)
Mary Roberts Rinehart

SIX

IT is by reason of her gifts as a story teller pure and simple that Mary Roberts Rinehart takes a place among the six women selected for special treatment here. No reader will be found to question for a moment her extraordinary ability to tell a rousing tale. After all, is not that a function of the novelist of prime importance? With her very first book she was in the full swing of popular favor. That was "The Circular Staircase," which appeared in 1908. The following year its success was duplicated with "The Man in Lower Ten," which provided a thrill that stirred even the most jaded and experienced reader of exciting narrative. Still a greater hit was another book of the same year, "When a Man Marries," which, as the play known as "Seven Days," was approved alike by Broadway and the most remote and unsophisticated of the "Tank Towns." In addition to "Seven Days" the author has scored stage successes with "A Double Life," and "The Avenger." Following up her early successes Mary Roberts Rinehart has written "The Window at the White Cat," 1910, "The Street of Seven Stars," "Kings, Queens, and Pawns," "Bab; a Sub-Deb," "Tenting Tonight," "The Amazing Interlude," and "The Altar of Freedom," to mention only half the list. Several of her later books have been descriptive of her own experiences close behind the fighting line of the French, British, Belgian and American armies on the Western front.

A year or two ago Mrs. Rinehart expounded "My Creed: The Way to Happiness As I Have Found It." She had recently passed her fortieth birthday, and, looking backwards, she recalled the early days of young wifehood and motherhood, the days which her tall sons have forgotten, but which she has not forgotten, when she made button-holes in the evening by the fire, or went to market in the western Pennsylvania way, or baked birthday cakes with little china dolls in them. Following a long period of invalidism came the venture in authorship. With a baby on her knee she learned to use a typewriter with two fingers. Her first accepted contribution was neither story nor verse, but a little article telling how she had systematized the work of the household, with two maids and a colored "buttons." This earned her twenty-five dollars, the first money of her own that she ever possessed, and she still thinks of it as the largest check that ever came to her from a publisher.

Mrs. Rinehart began, as so many writers have begun, with verse, and with the usual lack of material good luck. Then she turned to short stories, and in the first year, with prices for stories smaller than they are now, and no particular demand for new writers, she made about twelve hundred dollars. But the significant early story is the one concerning her attempt to sell a book of children's verse. She took the book to New York later, but carried it back to Pittsburgh. Of the trip she says: "From the ferryboat as it crossed the river I remember looking at the silhouette of the city, rising above the morning mist, and wondering what it had in store for me. It had failure, then. I spent one day there (in New York), a heart-breaking day, going from publisher to publisher. In only two did I see any responsible person, and I met a negative in every case. The market was crowded with children's verse. But one man was very kind to me, and to that publishing house I later sent 'The Circular Staircase,' my first novel. I went back to the train that night, aching with fatigue. I had walked more than I should have, and my stockings were in tatters. But I had learned what not to write."

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MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

WRITING A NOVEL

THE position of the novelist engaged in writing a novel can only be indicated by a shocking exaggeration which is this: He is not much better than a medium in a trance. We, personally, having written a novel—or maybe two or three—know what we are talking about. The immense and permanent curiosity of people all over the planet who read books at all fixes itself upon the question, in respect to the novelist: "*How* does he write?" As Mary S. Watts remarks, that is one thing no novelist can tell you. He doesn't know himself. . . . Any one can find out by writing a novel. And to write one you need little beyond a few personalities firmly in mind, a pen, pencil or typewriter and lots of paper. An outline is superfluous and sometimes harmful.

* * *

You will have the first few pages, the opening scene, possibly the first chapter, fairly in mind; you may have mental notes on one or two things your people will say. Beyond that you have only the haziest idea of what it will all be about. Write. As soon as you write it will come to you. Somehow. What do you care how? Let the psychologists stew over that. They, in all probability, will figure out that the story has already completely formed itself, in all its essentials and in many details, in your subconscious mind, the lowermost cellar of your personality. . . . As you write, and as the result of the mere act of writing, the story, lying dormant in your subcellar, slowly shakes a leg, quivers, stretches, extends itself to its full length, yawns, rises with sundry anatomical contortions and, advancing, crosses the threshold of your subconsciousness, into the well dusted and cleaned basement of your consciousness, whence it is but a step to full daylight and the shadow of printed black characters upon a to-and-fro traveling page.

* * *

As soon as you have done two or three days' stint on the book—you ought to plan to write so many words a day or week; and it's no matter that you don't know what they will be—as soon as you've got a fairish start you will find that you have several persons in your story who are, to all intents and purposes, as much alive as yourself; and considerably more self-willed. They will promptly take the story in their hands and you will have nothing to do in the remaining 50,000 words or more but to set down what happens.

* * *

No doubt many who have read the foregoing will turn up their noses at the well-meant advice it contains, considering that we have largely jested on a serious subject. We take this occasion to declare most earnestly that we have seldom been so serious in our life. We mean what we have said. Writing a novel is one of the most rounded forms of self-education. It is one of the most honorable, too, since, unlike the holder of public office, the person who is getting the education does not do so at the public expense. We have regard, naturally, to the mere act of *writing* the novel. If afterward it finds a publisher, and less probably a public, that has nothing to do with the author, whose self-culture, intensive, satisfying and wholesome, has been completed before that time.

* * *

Whether a novelist deserves any credit for the novel he writes is a question; but he will get the credit for it anyway; and nothing matters where so wonderful an experience is to be gained. Next to being hypnotized there is nothing like it; and it has the great advantage that you know what you are doing, whereas the hypnotic subject does not. No preparation is necessary or even desirable, since even in so specific a detail as the outline of the story the people of your narrative take things entirely in their own hands and reduce the outline to the now well-known status of a scrap of paper. . . . We talk of "advice" in writing a novel. The best advice is not to take any.

From the *New York Sun*.

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